



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

AGENDA ITEM: 4

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 30 JULY 2003 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 7.06PM AND CONCLUDING AT 8.15PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr C Ashenden, Mrs C M Aston, Mr R Boas, Mr D Briggs (Vice-Chairman), Mr J M Elfes (Chairman), Mr R Haynes, Mr C Hurworth, Mr N Jeffrey, Mrs V Lynch, Mr S Pratt

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr I Burgess, Mrs M Freeman, Mrs M Keyworth, Mr M Walker, Miss J Taylor, Mr A McVeigh

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr F Gomme, Mrs B Harris and Mr A Lambourne.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2003, were confirmed subject to the following:

Item 6 Improving Access to the Countryside – making a start

Page 6, paragraph 3: delete “replace them with kissing gates providing access for the disabled.” and add “ensure that the principles of British Standards 5709 were followed”.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was agreed that items for Any Other Business should be sent to the Committee Administrator at least two days before the date of the meeting. Any urgent items should be tabled to the Chairman for consideration on the day of the meeting.

Mr Jeffrey updated members on the meeting of the Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum (OCAF) on 7 July 2003.

Mr Harris, as the OCC Strategic Countryside Access Officer, was reporting to members of the OCAF on what he had observed in relation to the consultation on Mr Jeffrey's suggested Pilot Rights of Way Improvement Plan Project. Mr Jeffrey read an extract from the minutes. A copy of the minutes is attached at Appendix 1.

The Chairman read out a letter from Thames Valley Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied Group (PHAB) supporting the project. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 2.

5. ACCESS LAND MAPPING

Members expressed concern that the Countryside Agency (CA) had not sought the views of the Local Access Forum on this issue. Mr Walker commented that there was an expectation from the CA that the Forum would forward its comments as a matter of course. It was agreed that the views of the Forum would be sent to the CA, following the next meeting of the Forum in September.

It was noted that the Chiltern Society had written to their Area Footpath Secretary's asking them to look at maps relevant to their area and report back within the next two to three weeks.

Concern was expressed at the short timescale for responses. Currently any member of the public was able to make a submission. However, once the provisional map was published, only those people with a particular interest in areas of land would be able to challenge a decision. The Planning Inspectorate would then deal with any issues.

Mr Elfes left the Chair. Mr Briggs in the Chair.

Mr Elfes spoke on behalf of the Ramblers Association, informing members that volunteers were being used to ascertain whether any pockets of land were not shown on the Draft Maps. However, he did express concern regarding consistency. Some areas not shown were identified as appearing to meet the criteria as Access Land, but appeared to serve little purpose, and other areas qualified that did not appear to be relevant.

Mr Jeffery reported interest shown by members of the public at the High Wycombe Roadshow.

In talking to the CA representative, Mr Elfes was informed that some land might not be mapped because up to date biological data was not available. The Ramblers Association would do its best to aid with the mapping exercise.

Mr Elfes resumed the Chair.

It was noted that members of the Cyclists Touring Club were aware of the Mapping Consultation, as were members of the National Farmers Union.

Members of the Committee examined the maps on show and made comments regarding any pockets of land that they felt had not been designated. These were as follows:

Area 1

Heathland at Black Park – Is this correct area? CA needs to check. MAP TQ08 GR 5 D/E 34

Area 2

Rammamere Heath Has this been missed? Straddles both Area 7 and possibly Area 8
MAP SP82 AA – DD to 24-23

Area 3

Beacon Hill and Clipper Down Areas of Access Land. Identified areas adjacent appear to meet criteria should they be in? MAP SP80 GRJJ 10 and KK 14-13

Area 4

Bacombe, Lodge and Beacon Hill – Lodge Hill is predominantly woodland? MAP SP80 GR M – 31/30. Bacombe Hill. Should this be included? Map SP80 GR M to P / 29-28

Beacon Hill SSSI Should be on? Map SP80 GR J – 31/30

Area 5

Lodge Hill. is boundary correctly drawn Map SP80 A/B – 43/44

Area 6

Muswell Hill Area – Are there any further areas adjacent to the areas that have been identified that may have been missed? Map SP60 GR I/J/K/L – 13/12/11

Although maps were available at County Hall and High Wycombe comment was made that more could have been made available, possibly at libraries, in other parts of the County.

Members were asked to bring any further comments to the next meeting on 13 September 2003.

6. BUSINESS AT FUTURE MEETINGS

The following items were suggested to be discussed at future meetings.

- Access Land Mapping
- A visit to Mr Jeffery's proposed project area
- A visit to Tom Bindoff's display area
- Invitation of James Littlewood to address the forum
- A report from Mr Gomme about the Community Appraisal process

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mini Rights of Way Improvement Plan Area

Mr Pratt informed members that Shaun Pope, Traffic Management Project Officer, had carried out extensive consultation work, as part of a three-year project to promote access to quiet country lanes, involving local people, walkers, horse riders etc. This work could be utilised to form part of a Rights of Way Improvement plan Pilot Project. Work was also being carried out on access for the disabled and included parts of Hertfordshire.

Mr Burgess suggested that further funding might be obtained through the work done by Mr Pope.

It was agreed that Mr Pratt would present a report on this item at the next meeting.

Access Land Mapping and Publicity

Mr Jeffery raised the issue of poor publicity from the Countryside Agency regarding the Access Land Mapping project.

After lengthy discussion the Forum as a whole felt the level of publicity was adequate and that no further action was needed on its part.

CHAIRMAN